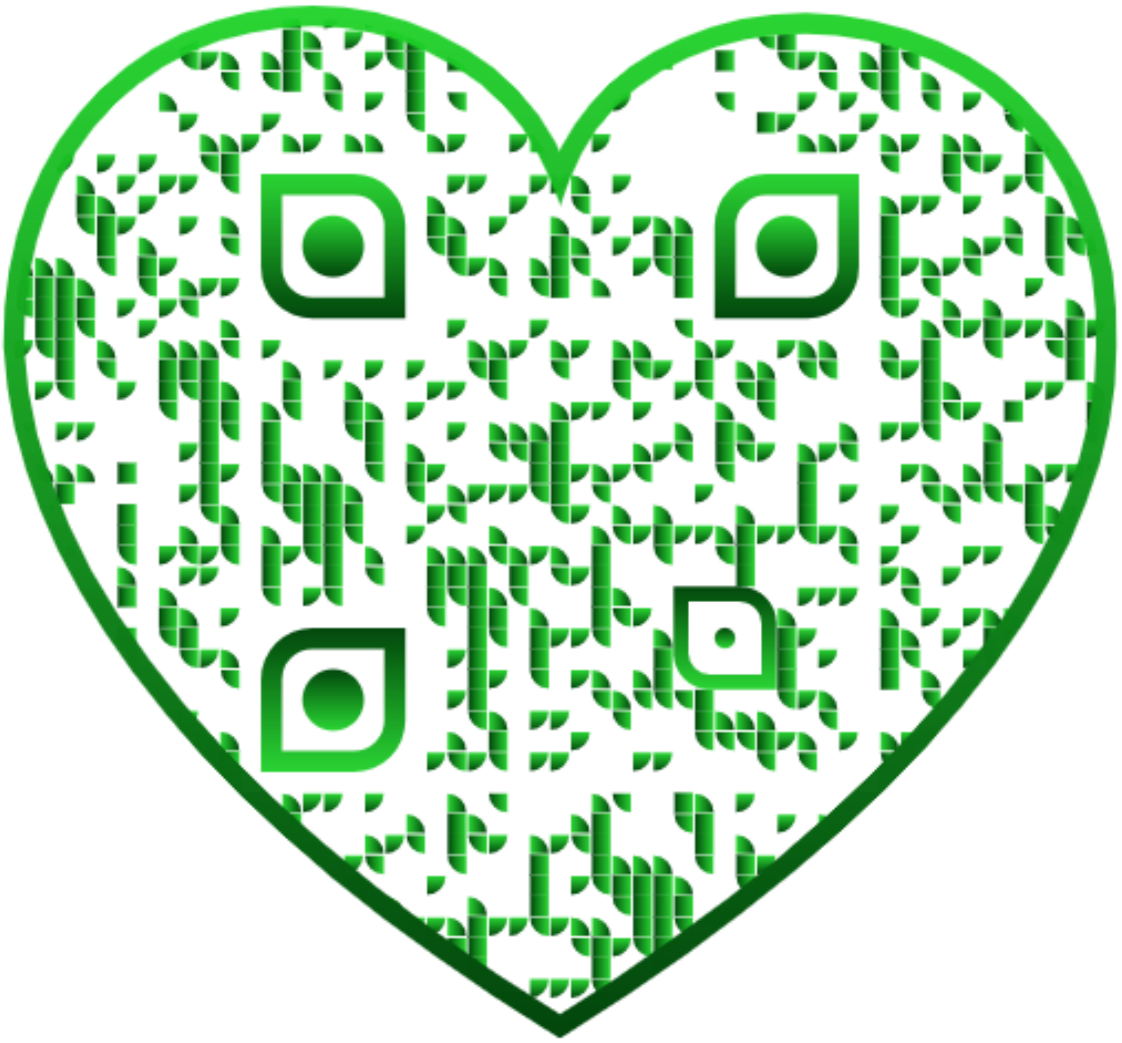
Your Rights and Care Standards:

A Guide for People with Type 1 Diabetes

American Diabetes Association®



The American Diabetes Association® (ADA) updates its *Standards of Care in Diabetes* annually so that people living with diabetes get the most effective evidence-based treatment.

You have the right to consistent, high-quality diabetes care that fits your individual needs and supports your life.

This guide aligns with the Standards of Care and was created to help you feel confident and informed about your treatment plan, including key questions to ask your healthcare team so you can take charge of your health and wellbeing.

This guide focuses on three key pillars of type 1 diabetes management:

Understanding & Monitoring

Management & Lifestyle Integration

Support & Wellbeing

These three pillars are closely connected and together provide a balanced approach to empower you to manage your diabetes well while making sure your overall treatment plan is easier to follow and more sustainable.

Your healthcare team is your trusted partner to create a personalized plan—one that is built around your needs, preferences, and goals so you can live well with type 1 diabetes.

You have the right to consistent, high-quality diabetes care that fits your individual needs and supports your life.

This includes the right to:

Clear treatment goals that make sense for your life

Care that follows the latest evidence-based guidelines

Personalized plans that work for you

This guide is here to celebrate your strengths, highlight your rights and help you and your healthcare team make confident; informed choices that are best for you every day.

Terms Used in this Guide

In this guide, we use the term **healthcare team** to refer to:

- Certified diabetes care and education specialist (CDCES)
- Primary care and other clinicians
- Nurses
- Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs)
- Exercise specialists
- Pharmacists
- Dentists
- Foot doctors (podiatrists)
- Eye doctors (optometrists or ophthalmologists)
- Behavioral health professionals
- Peer Health Educators
- Community Health Workers (CHW)

We use the term **blood glucose** instead of "blood sugar."

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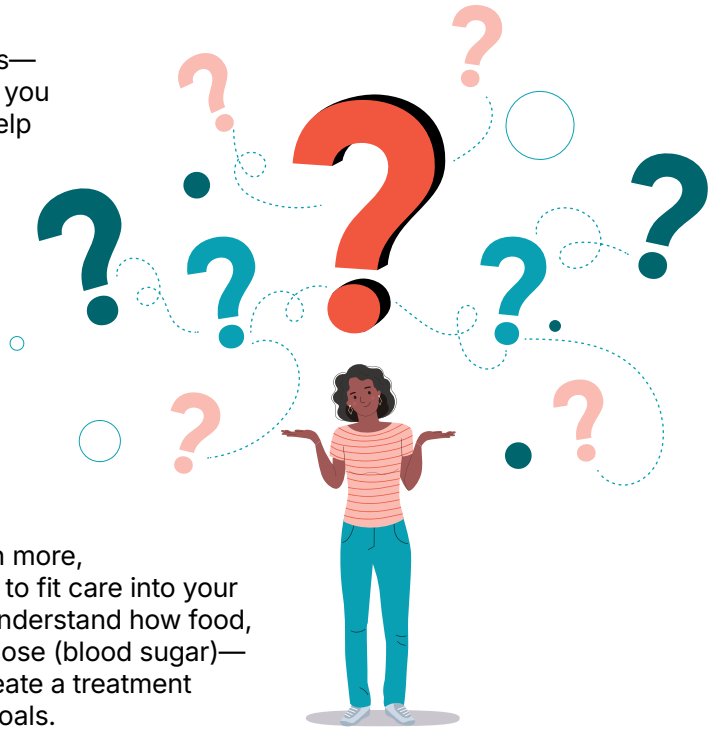
CHECK & CHAT boxes have been included throughout your guide. These thoughtful tools are designed to help you feel prepared, confident, and heard during every healthcare conversation, whether in person or virtual.

Life with Type 1 Diabetes

There's a lot to know and do to live well with type 1 diabetes—and it can feel overwhelming, especially if you or someone you love is newly diagnosed. This guide is here to help. It will help bring clarity and confidence to your daily decisions while explaining how your healthcare team can support you every step of the way.



You can live a full, healthy life with type 1 diabetes, no matter what age you're diagnosed. Whether you're newly diagnosed or have lived with type 1 diabetes for a long time, it's normal to wonder:

- What does this mean for my long-term health?
- Who should be involved in my care?
- What should I focus on?

You don't need all the answers right away, and as you learn more, you'll adjust and adapt. Managing diabetes means learning to fit care into your daily life. While that may sound like a lot, over time, you'll understand how food, activity, stress, illness, and insulin all affect your blood glucose (blood sugar)—and how to respond. Your healthcare team will help you create a treatment plan that fits your needs and helps you reach your health goals.

What is type 1 diabetes?

In type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas. It recognizes these cells as foreign invaders and gradually damages them, resulting in little or no insulin production.

When you eat, your body breaks food down into glucose and sends it to your cells. When glucose enters your cells, it is either used as fuel for energy right away or stored for later use. Without insulin, glucose builds up in the blood instead of fueling the body. That's why you need insulin every day to replace what your body can no longer make. Your goal is to keep your blood glucose within your target range so your body can function well and stay healthy.

Keeping your blood glucose in your target range takes a treatment plan and a little detective work to watch your patterns. Over time, you'll start to notice how your blood glucose responds to things like food and physical activity from day to day—and you'll learn how to make adjustments. Your healthcare team is there to help you figure out what works best for your needs and goals.

The goal isn't to have perfect blood glucose levels; it's to understand and take steps to help you stay in your target range. Understanding how food, physical activity, stress, and illness affect your glucose will help you get better at spotting your own patterns over time and the steps you can make to stay in your target range.

Why Blood Glucose Management Matters

Insulin keeps you healthy but balancing blood glucose matters too.

High blood glucose (hyperglycemia) over time may affect blood vessels and blood flow which leads to issues with your eyes, kidneys, heart, and nerves. Low blood glucose (hypoglycemia) also happens often for people living with type 1 diabetes.

Managing Low Blood Glucose (Hypoglycemia)

Hypoglycemia can happen when your blood glucose drops below 70 mg/dL as a result of insulin, food (especially carbohydrates), and physical activity being out of balance.

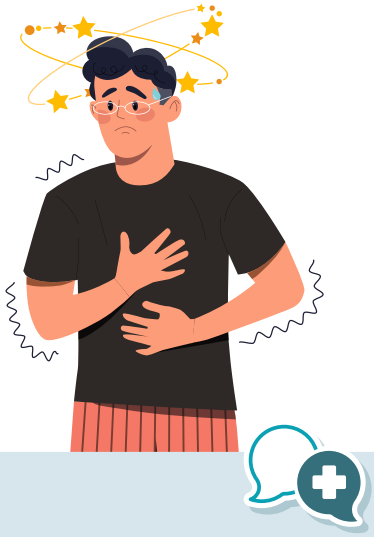
Some of the reasons hypoglycemia may occur:

Alcohol, especially on an empty stomach.

More physical activity or exercise than usual — physical activity can make your body more sensitive to insulin and lower blood glucose. This effect on your blood glucose can continue several hours after the activity.

Too little food, like eating smaller portions (even when making healthy food choices), eating less than expected, and missing meals or snacks.

Too much insulin or other diabetes medications.



You may notice common early signs and symptoms, such as shakiness, sweating, hunger, dizziness, confusion, irritability, weakness, or fatigue. These vary from person to person and may develop quickly, which is why it's important to know when to address them.

Severe Hypoglycemia

Severe hypoglycemia can happen when blood glucose drops to very low levels (often around 54 mg/dL or below) and you may be unable to treat the low safely on your own. At this point, symptoms such as confusion or loss of consciousness may occur, which is why treating low blood glucose early is important. This can be very dangerous and lead to coma or death if not treated right away. That's why knowing what warning signs are and treating your low blood glucose right away matters so much.

Check & Chat

Hypoglycemia unawareness is when you don't notice or feel the early warning signs of hypoglycemia. It's more common than you might think and it makes low blood glucose dangerous because it can progress to severe hypoglycemia without any signs. If you start to get low blood glucose without symptoms fairly often, you and your healthcare team can work together to address it.

Treating Hypoglycemia: The 15-15 Rule

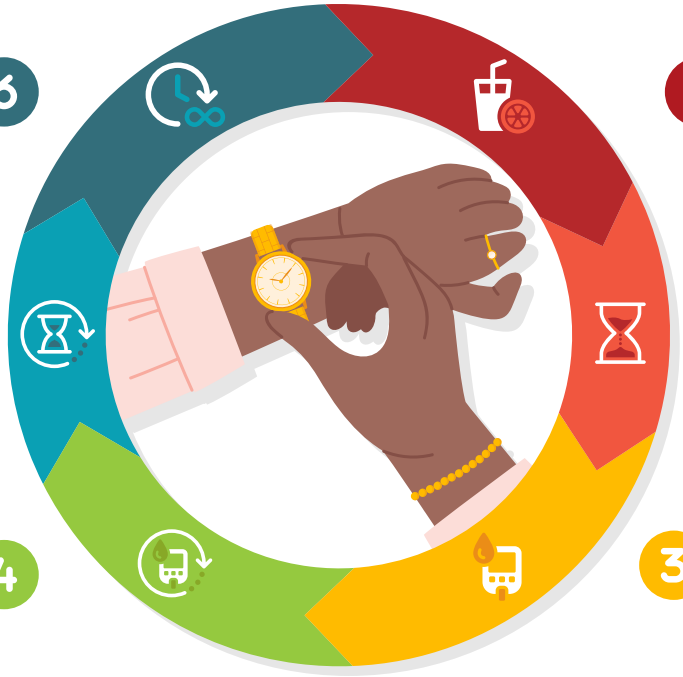
When you feel symptoms of hypoglycemia, check your blood glucose level as soon as you can, then treat it right away. Ask your healthcare team what they recommend if you ever have the symptoms of low blood glucose but cannot check your level right away. Then you know in advance how to stay as safe as possible.

Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) systems read glucose levels from the fluid between your body's cells, called interstitial fluid, and not directly from your blood. CGM readings may lag behind Blood Glucose Monitoring (BGM) readings by 5 minutes or more. When you're feeling low, or your levels are changing quickly, use a BGM device to get the most current, real-time number for treatment and to verify your blood glucose level.

The 15-15 rule is a simple way to remember how to treat hypoglycemia with fast-acting carbohydrates. Fast-acting carbohydrates enter your bloodstream fast and raise your blood glucose level quickly.

15-15 rule:

1. Take 15 grams of fast-acting carbohydrates
2. Wait 15 minutes
3. If you're still low, or your BGM doesn't show your glucose trending up, have another 15 grams of carbohydrates
4. Wait another 15 minutes and recheck your blood glucose
5. If you're still low, or your BGM doesn't show your glucose trending up, have another 15 grams of carbohydrates
6. Repeat as needed until your blood glucose is above 70 mg/dL



If you use an AID or hybrid closed-loop insulin pump start with a smaller amount (5 to 10 grams) of fast acting carbs. The pump's smart system automatically lowers or stops the background insulin when it detects or predicts a low. Be familiar with what to do if your glucose goes below ≤54, be familiar with the Emergency Treatment for Severe Hypoglycemia that is addressed in the next section.

Examples of 15 grams of fast-acting carbohydrates include:

- 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of fruit juice or regular soda (not a diet soda)
- Glucose tablets or gel with 15 grams of carbohydrates (take as directed on the label)
- Easy-to-chew candies (check the label to find the portion for 15 grams of carbohydrates)

If it's not time for your next meal, eat a small snack with protein and carbs, like cheese and crackers, to help keep your blood glucose levels in your target range.

Check & Chat

Talk to your healthcare team about whether you should treat low blood glucose differently.

For example, if you use an insulin pump or an automated insulin delivery (AID) system (more on this later in the "Daily Tools for Managing Type 1 Diabetes" section), you might need different amounts of carbohydrates to treat hypoglycemia.

If you often have low blood glucose, ask your healthcare team whether your treatment plan should be adjusted.

Emergency Treatment for Severe Hypoglycemia

When blood glucose falls dangerously low, or you can't treat it by yourself, action is needed right away to prevent serious harm. Repeated severe lows can affect brain function over time, so prevention and preparation matter.

If you are too confused, vomiting, or unable to safely eat or drink, glucagon comes to the rescue. It's a lifesaving prescription medicine that quickly raises blood glucose when you need it most.

Today, many glucagon products are available in ready-to-use forms, making them easier for family members or caregivers to administer during an emergency. Talk with your healthcare team about choosing a glucagon option that is simple to use when needed.

Being prepared can make all the difference.

Here's how to get ready:

- Glucagon is a prescription medicine, so ask your healthcare provider for a prescription.
- Store glucagon according to the instructions on the package and check the expiration date regularly. Replace it when it expires or it has been used so you will have one on hand and ready to use in an emergency.
- Keep glucagon with you wherever you spend time (such as at home, work, and school).
- Show family, friends, and coworkers:
  - Where it's stored and how to access it
  - When to use it
  - How to give it to you
- Tell them to call 911 if you don't wake up or respond after glucagon, or if they're worried about your safety.

Check & Chat

Your healthcare team can help you choose the right type of glucagon and practice using it. Having it nearby—and people who know your plan—can help you feel confident and safe in an emergency.

Managing High Blood Glucose (Hyperglycemia)

At times, blood glucose may rise above your target range. This is called hyperglycemia.

It can happen for many reasons, such as:

- Missing or not taking enough insulin (including taking an insulin dose late)
- Your insulin dose does not match what you eat (eating more than your insulin can cover)
- Equipment issues, such as your insulin pump not working properly
- Medications, illness, infection, or other kinds of stress on your body

When blood glucose levels run high, you might notice you're thirstier than usual, going to the bathroom more often, feeling tired, having a dry mouth, or even seeing things a bit blurry.

Ketones and Diabetic Ketoacidosis

If your body doesn't have enough insulin to use blood glucose for energy, it begins using your body fat instead. This process creates ketones that can build up in your blood and show up in your urine as your body is working to get rid of them. When ketones get too high, they can cause a life-threatening condition called diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) that needs immediate medical care.

You can check ketones using urine test strips (20 mg/dL and higher warrants attention) or a blood ketone meter (0.6 mmol/L and higher warrants attention). You and your healthcare team will develop an action plan for when to check for ketones and what to do if your ketone results are high.

You are more likely to develop ketones when:

- Your blood glucose levels are above >200 mg/dL
- You have less insulin in your body, which is commonly due to a problem with your insulin delivery device or missing an insulin dose
- You're sick, vomiting, dehydrated, or under stress

There is is a condition called **euglycemic DKA** that can happen even when your blood glucose is not very high, especially if you don't eat enough carbs, take SGLT-2 inhibitors, use an insulin pump, or are sick.

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Your healthcare team will tell you if any medications increase your risk. Because euglycemic DKA can be easily missed, it's important to watch for it.

Emergency Treatment for DKA

If you ever feel very unwell—with nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, deep or fast breathing, extreme tiredness, or confusion, seek emergency care right away, even if your blood glucose is under 250 mg/dL. These signs can mean DKA, which needs urgent treatment.

Preparing for High Ketones

Being prepared makes all the difference:

- Keep ketone test strips or a blood ketone meter handy.
- Know your plan for high ketones and what to do, such as how to adjust insulin doses.
- Tell family, friends, or coworkers your warning signs and when to call 911.

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Your healthcare team can partner with you to review and refine this plan. Your healthcare team can help you understand when to measure ketones, how to help prevent DKA, and what to do if it happens.

Being Prepared and Staying Safe

Living with type 1 diabetes means being ready for changes in your blood glucose levels. Many days feel steady, but unplanned changes to your day, such as illness, missed meals, extra physical activity, stress, or problems with the devices you use to manage diabetes, can sometimes lead to blood glucose levels outside of your target range. A few simple steps can help you adjust and manage with confidence.

Staying Prepared

Getting prepared in small ways makes surprises easier to manage.

Keep these handy:

- A blood glucose meter (BGM) and/or continuous glucose monitor (CGM)
- Fast-acting carbohydrates (hard candies, glucose tablets, etc.) for treating lows
- Glucagon for treating severe lows
- Supplies to check ketones
- Backup insulin and insulin delivery supplies
- Emergency contact information
- A sick day plan created in advance with your healthcare team
- Medic-alert id bracelet

Even a basic plan can ease worry when blood glucose goes too high or low.

When to Seek Immediate Help

While following your treatment plan is important, sometimes you need to contact your doctor or call 911. This includes when:

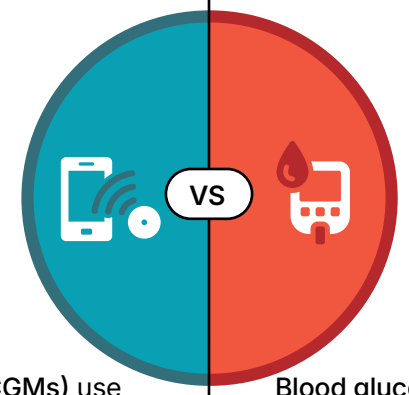
- Your blood glucose stays low and doesn't improve after treating it (2-3 cycles or 30 to 45 minutes)
- Your blood glucose remains very high for several hours
- You have elevated blood or urine ketones
- You're vomiting and can't keep fluids down
- Your breathing becomes rapid or labored
- You feel confused or lose consciousness
- You don't have access to insulin
- Your insulin delivery system is not working

If something doesn't feel right, it's always okay to reach out for help.

Monitoring Blood Glucose

Blood glucose monitoring tools give you the insights you need to make management decisions and spot issues early.

There are two main approaches:



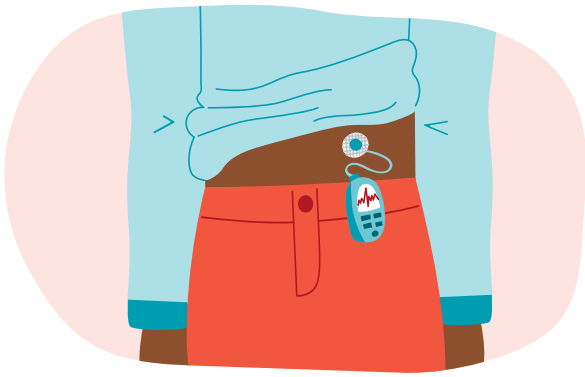
Continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) use a wearable or implanted sensor to track glucose levels in the fluid around your cells (interstitial fluid).

These show both the current level and glucose trends throughout the day and night and over time. Glucose readings from a CGM reflect a delayed 5 minute (or longer) real-time blood glucose reading.

Blood glucose meters (BGMs) measure blood glucose with a test strip and require a drop of blood for each reading.

BGMs serve as a crucial backup for CGM users, especially when symptoms don't align with CGM readings. CGMs excel at alerting you to highs and lows while showing patterns that fingersticks alone might miss. Your healthcare team can guide you to the best choice for your needs.

AID Systems



Many people with type 1 diabetes use an automated insulin delivery (AID) system. These systems link an insulin pump with a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) and use software to adjust insulin delivery automatically based on the CGM readings.

AID systems can help reduce blood glucose ups and downs by adjusting insulin delivery around the clock based on your CGM data and the settings you and your healthcare team program into the device.

These systems automatically handle a lot of your background insulin needs, but they still need your help for mealtime insulin and physical activity. For bigger meals, you tell the system how many carbs you're eating (or pick "normal," "more," or "less") so it can give the right bolus of insulin. For exercise or activity, you turn on exercise mode (or set a higher glucose target) before or during to lower insulin delivery and help prevent low blood glucose.

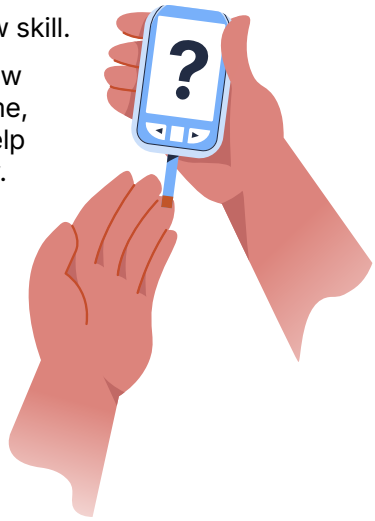
Backup Plans for Technology and Supplies

Even trusted tools can have problems. Keeping extra supplies, such as spare insulin, batteries, and monitoring supplies, on hand and having backup methods for checking blood glucose and delivering insulin will give you peace of mind. Your healthcare team can help you create backup plans to meet your needs.

What to Expect

Managing type 1 diabetes gets easier the more you practice, just like learning any new skill.

Remember your goal isn't perfect blood glucose levels. At first, you'll start noticing how your body reacts to insulin, food, exercise, and changes in your daily routine. Over time, you'll keep learning from what happens, try new ideas, and make small changes to help keep your glucose levels steady and your routine and choices will flow more naturally. Your healthcare team is always there to help you figure things out.



Understanding Your Numbers

Your blood glucose readings provide insights into how your body handles insulin and responds to other factors throughout the day and night. They show how food, activity, stress, illness, medicine, and timing all work together and affect your blood glucose levels. Spotting patterns turns simple data into helpful information for safer, steadier care.

Common Times to Check Blood Glucose

Whether you use a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) or a blood glucose meter (BGM), paying attention to your numbers can help you spot patterns. A CGM shows how your glucose changes throughout the day and night. With a blood glucose meter, checking at the same times each day can help you notice patterns over time.

Look for patterns:

Sleep:
Before bedtime and when you wake up

Symptoms:
Whenever you sense symptoms of low or high blood glucose

Eating:
Before meals and two hours after

Exercise:
Before and after physical activity

Check & Chat

One number tells part of the story, but patterns over time reveal more. If you use a CGM, your healthcare team might talk with you about time in range (TIR), which is the amount of time your blood glucose stays in your personalized target range.

For most adults, the target range is 70–180 mg/dL. Work with your healthcare team to find your target range that meets your needs. Target ranges also differ for children and teens, as well as during pregnancy.

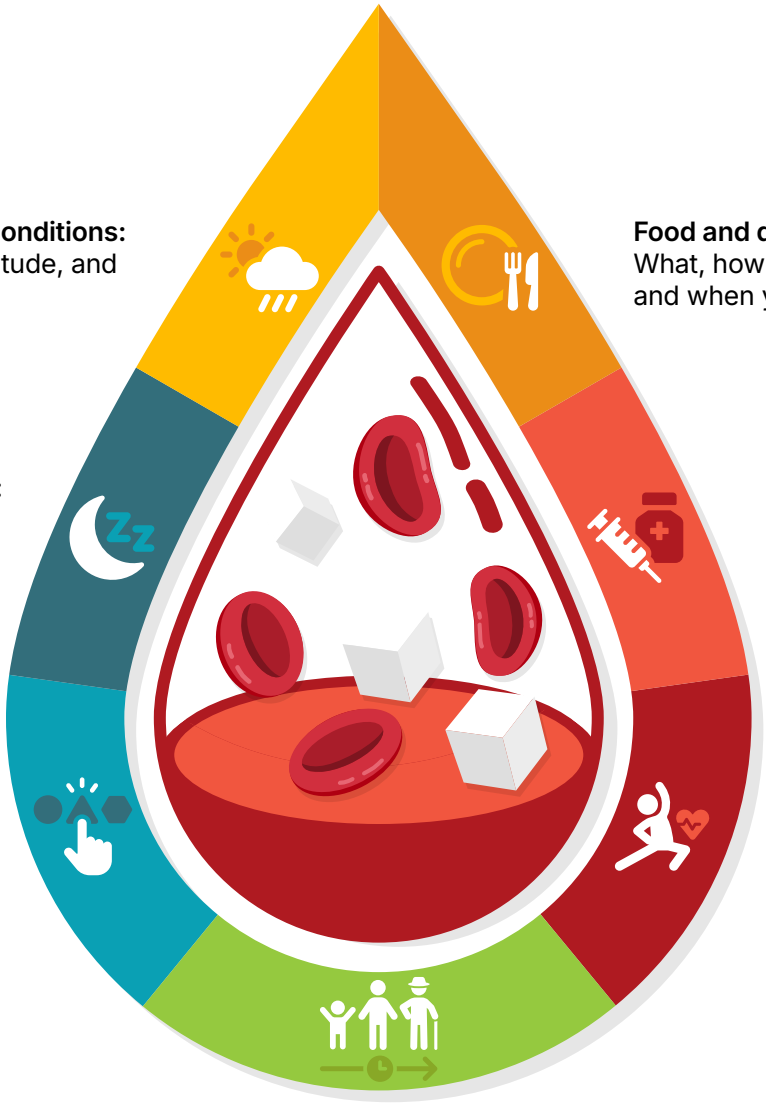
Why Blood Glucose Changes

Blood glucose can be affected by many different factors that may include:

Environment and conditions:
Weather, travel, altitude, and changes in routine

Food and drink:
What, how much, and when you eat

Sleep, stress, and illness:
Rest quality, emotions, sickness, and feeling "off"



Medications and insulin:
Other medications, insulin doses, timing, delivery method, and absorption rate

Decisions and habits:
Planning, choices, and everyday actions

Physical activity:
Type, effort, length, and timing relative to eating and taking insulin

Hormone and body changes:
Puberty, growth spurts, menopause, other age-related changes, menstrual cycles, and pregnancy

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All of these factors affect your blood glucose, so work with your healthcare team to identify patterns and adjust as needed.

Daily Tools for Managing Type 1 Diabetes

Living with type 1 diabetes involves taking steps and making decisions throughout the day to manage it. Over time, these steps blend into your daily life and support your health, wellbeing, safety, and independence. You and your healthcare team will work together to explore options and find a treatment plan that works best for you.

Insulin

Insulin is the key treatment for type 1 diabetes. It helps glucose move from your blood into your body's cells for energy. But not all types of insulin work the same way. Some offer steady coverage all day and night, while others work quickly to handle blood glucose levels rising from meals or to bring high levels back to your target range. Your healthcare team is the resource that will guide you to the right types and amounts of insulin for your needs.

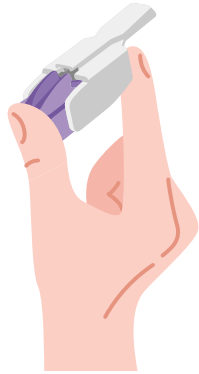
Ways to Take Insulin

There are several ways to take insulin, including:

Injecting it with syringes or an insulin pen

Injecting it with a connected insulin pen or pen cap that tracks doses and timing

Using an insulin pump or automated insulin delivery (AID) system for continuous delivery



Inhaling rapid-acting dry powder insulin through the lungs using an inhaler device

Check & Chat

No single method is best for everyone. You'll likely use a combination of these options as you find out what fits your life best at any given time. The key is to choose something that feels like you can stick to, fits your routine, and keeps your blood glucose in your target range. It's okay to change how you take your insulin as technology advances or you go through life. You and your healthcare team will work together to choose what matches your needs.

Eating with Type 1 Diabetes

What, how much, and when you eat all play a role in keeping your blood glucose steady. There is no one right eating plan for type 1 diabetes. The key is to create an eating plan that fits your needs while helping you reach your health goals. You can work with a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) to create an eating plan that works best for you.

Carbohydrates (carbs) affect blood glucose the most. How fast and how high your blood glucose rises depends on the types of carbohydrate foods you eat and what they are paired with.

Slower-acting choices, such as quality carbs like starchy vegetables, beans/legumes, fruits, whole grains, and lower-fat milk or plain Greek yogurt (which are high in protein), tend to raise blood glucose more gradually.

Faster-acting carbohydrates, such as juice, regular soda, or candy, raise blood glucose quickly (and can help treat lows) but they can cause sharp spikes when eaten alone (without pairing them with protein, fat, or fiber).

Protein, fat, and fiber are your friends when it comes to eating!

Pairing these helps slow down how fast your body digests food, helps you feel full longer, and gives you steady and predictable glucose levels instead of quick ups and downs.

Many people find that building meals around vegetables, lean proteins, starchy vegetables, beans and legumes, fruits, whole grains, and low-fat milk or Greek yogurt helps keep blood glucose steadier and supports heart health at the same time. Highly processed foods and added sugars are not off limits, but noticing how they affect your blood glucose numbers and how you feel will help you manage your diabetes.

Regular meals, balanced portions, and consistent eating patterns support stable blood glucose. Matching insulin timing to meals and giving insulin time to start working before eating helps avoid sharp rises or drops.

Check & Chat

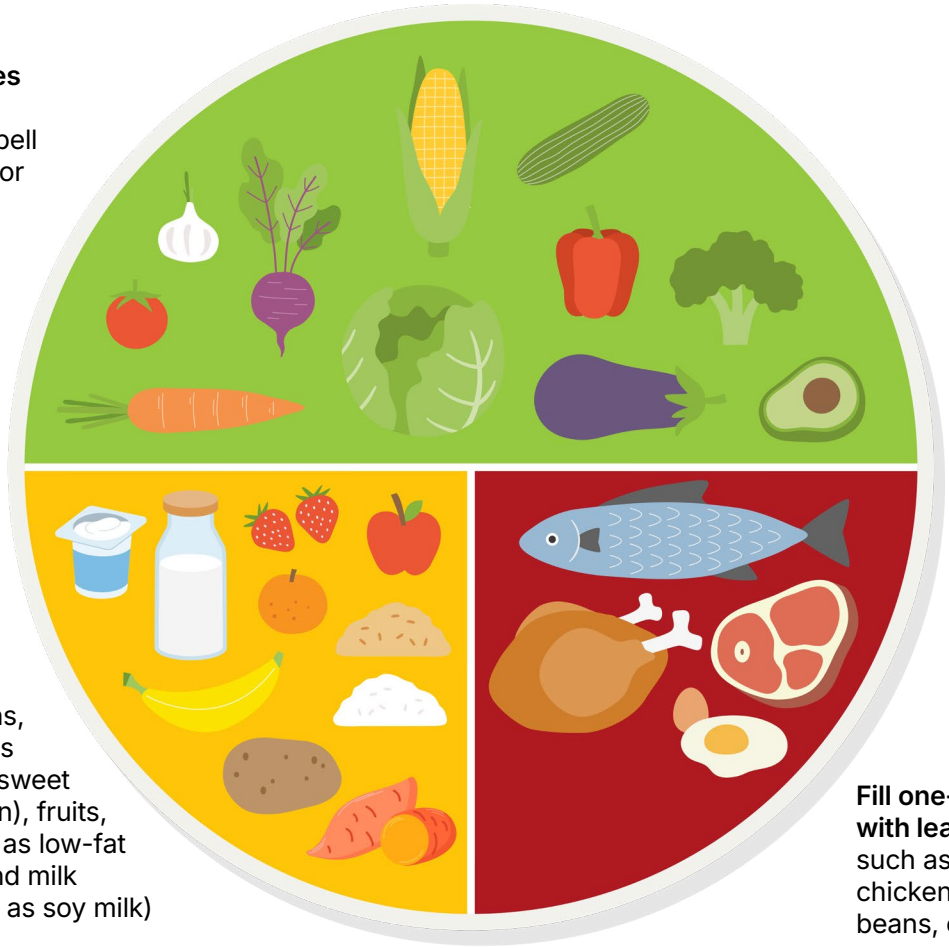
If you are not sure about the best timing for your insulin doses, ask your healthcare team. They can guide you based on your insulin type and daily routine.

Paying attention to patterns—not seeking perfection—makes eating feel more manageable and enjoyable.

A Way to Think About Balanced Meals

Use the Diabetes Plate as a visual guide to build balanced meals without counting, calculating, weighing, or measuring. On a nine-inch plate:

Fill half with non-starchy vegetables such as leafy greens, broccoli, bell peppers, carrots, or tomatoes



Fill one-quarter with high-quality carbohydrate foods, including whole grains (such as bulgur and quinoa), beans, starchy vegetables (such as squash, sweet potatoes, and corn), fruits, dairy foods (such as low-fat yogurt or milk), and milk alternatives (such as soy milk)

Fill one-quarter with lean protein such as fish, chicken, eggs, tofu, beans, or lean meats

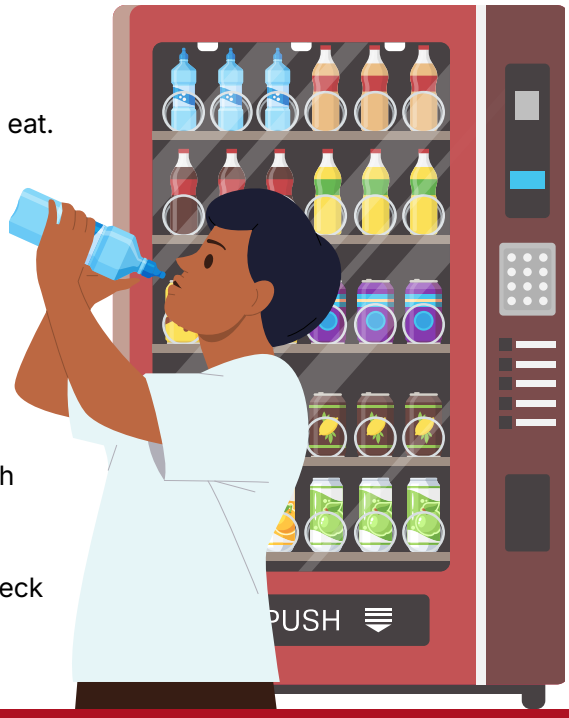
Drinks and Hidden Sugars

What you drink affects your blood glucose just as much as what you eat. Sugary drinks such as regular soda, sweetened tea, sports drinks, fruit juice, and flavored coffee can quickly raise blood glucose. Even drinks that seem healthy may have more sugar than you expect.

Caffeine may cause a mild, temporary increase in insulin resistance, which can raise blood glucose levels in some people. Not everyone responds the same way, so notice how your body reacts.

Alcohol can affect blood glucose, too. If you choose to drink alcohol, stay within daily limits (generally no more than one drink for women and two for men), check your blood glucose, and talk with your healthcare team about how to stay safe if you drink alcohol.

Water is the best choice. Seltzer water or sugar-free drinks can add variety when you want a break from plain water. For other drinks, check the labels and note how your blood glucose responds so you can choose what works best for your body.



Snacks, Flexibility, and Real Life

Snacks can help keep your blood glucose (blood sugar) steady between meals, especially when they combine carbohydrates and protein, such as:

- Peanut butter with a small apple
- Greek yogurt
- Nuts with fruit
- Cheese with whole grain crackers

Check & Chat

Snacking between meals is usually your choice and not a requirement, but if you feel you need snacks to manage your blood glucose, talk with your healthcare team. They can see whether your insulin doses need adjusting.

Feeling Stressed About Food

It is common to feel stressed about eating with type 1 diabetes. Worrying about highs and lows can make meals seem less enjoyable.

Here are some simple ways to make eating less stressful:

Try new foods one at a time, then pay attention to how your body responds

Adjust the timing of your meals, the amount of food you eat, or the insulin dose

Allow your eating routine to adjust as your lifestyle changes

Plan ahead, but keep it flexible

Eat regular meals to make it easier to see blood glucose patterns

Let your data guide when and what you eat

It may take some practice, but eating can feel enjoyable again.

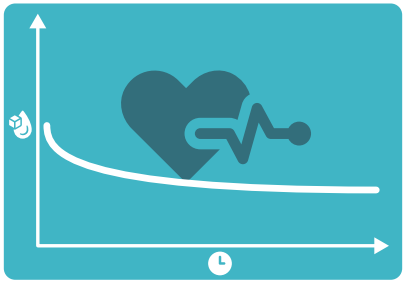
A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you figure out practical food choices, mealtimes, and insulin adjustments, as part of diabetes self-management education, that will fit your life.

Physical Activity and Exercise

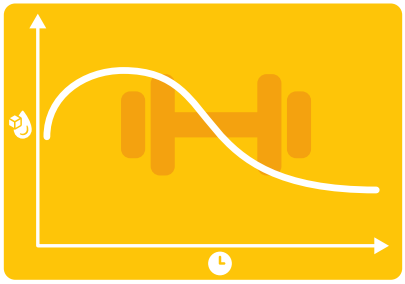
People with type 1 diabetes participate in all kinds of physical activity—from everyday movement to competitive sports. Being active through NEAT (Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis) means enjoying all your everyday movements such as walking around the house, standing while doing tasks, fidgeting, gardening or taking the stairs which naturally boost your energy, support better glucose control, and help you feel healthier every day. Many professional athletes live with type 1 diabetes. Their stories show that it may take some extra planning and effort, but you can absolutely reach your fitness level and goals.

Physical activity helps keep your heart healthy, improves how your body uses insulin, boosts your mood, and helps you sleep better. It can also affect blood glucose in different ways depending on how long or how intense your workout is. Learning how your body responds to different physical activity is an important part of managing diabetes.

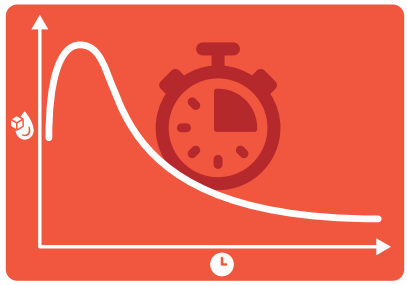
Here's how different types of physical activity can help with your blood glucose:



Aerobic activities (walking, running, biking, or swimming) usually lower your blood glucose right away and help keep it steadier for a good while.



Strength training (lifting weights or doing push-ups) might cause a small rise at first, but then it often helps lower your blood glucose later as your muscles keep working hard.



High-intensity workouts (sprinting or fast sports) can make your blood glucose go up for a short time at the start, but they usually bring it down nicely for several hours afterward.

The great thing is that exercise can keep your blood glucose lower for 24 to 48 hours sometimes even up to 72 hours! So, the more you move, the better your body gets at using glucose and staying in range.

Listen to Your Body: Finding Movement that Works for You

What matters most is noticing how your body reacts to different kinds of movement and finding a balance that feels realistic and sustainable for you. Mixing up your activities—such as walking, stretching, lifting weights, and biking—can help support both your physical health and blood glucose management.

Everyone's body responds differently to physical activity. Checking your blood glucose and paying attention to how you feel can help you notice patterns and signs of low blood glucose. This awareness can help you make informed decisions about food, insulin, and activity.

Getting Started with Movement

If you're just getting started or want motivation to start without overdoing it, these ideas can help you build a routine you can stick with and feel good about.

Begin with movement or **physical activities you enjoy**, like dancing, walking with others, or swimming.

Focus on **being consistent** before trying to do more.

Note how your meals, snacks, and insulin timing **affect your blood glucose** during physical activity, and if you need to, make adjustments to help you stay in your target range.

You might find it easier to **set small, specific goals**, such as "I'll take a 30-minute walk with my friend after dinner five days a week" to meet the recommended 150 minutes of activity each week.

Everyday Movement Matters

Even short bursts of movement done regularly throughout the day can have big benefits for your health. Choosing activities that feel enjoyable, flexible, and realistic will help make them a natural part of your routine and support your overall wellbeing.

The movement you do while living your daily life, such as walking around the house, doing chores, standing more often, or gardening, all add up and count, too.

Physical activity, including movement, can make a big difference in your overall health and blood glucose management, especially when done regularly. Unlike aerobic workouts or strength training, general activities of daily living are usually lower in intensity and happen throughout the day. They can help keep your body and joints moving, improve how well your insulin is used, and make it easier to stay active without a structured routine.

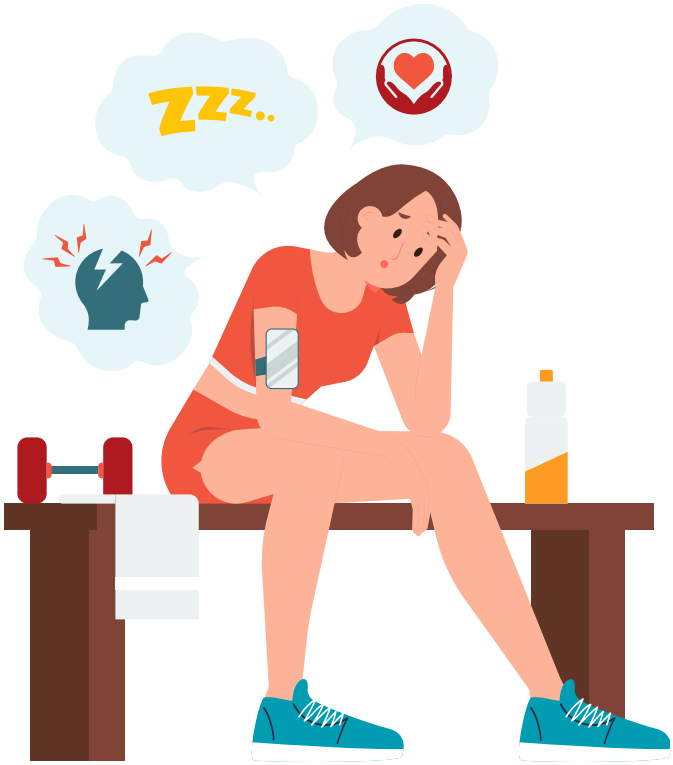
Exercise Safety

Before and during physical activity, check your blood glucose (blood sugar) and pay attention to trends, especially during longer or more intense exercise.

Physical activity can sometimes cause blood glucose to drop. If your blood glucose becomes low during or after activity, the 15–15 rule can help. This means having 15 grams of fast-acting carbohydrate, waiting 15 minutes, and then checking your blood glucose again to see if it has come back up.

After physical activity in the evening or an intense workout, keep checking your blood glucose for several hours—sometimes even overnight—because exercise can cause low blood glucose levels later on. Talk with your healthcare team about whether you need to make changes to your insulin doses before physical activity to help prevent low blood glucose afterward.

Physical activity may also cause blood glucose levels to rise. This can happen after high-intensity workouts or during times of stress (physical and emotional). Drink water to stay hydrated and check your blood glucose again later. Sometimes, levels that rise during activity may come down on their own once you stop moving. If your blood glucose stays high, follow your treatment plan or contact your healthcare team.



Check & Chat

With time, small adjustments, such as changing when you take insulin, eat, or move, can help physical activity feel safer, easier, and more predictable.

Trying different activities and noting how your blood glucose responds can help you plan for next time.

Remember, factors such as stress, illness, hormones, and lack of sleep can affect blood glucose levels, so your body may respond differently from one workout to the next.

As you learn your patterns, you and your healthcare team can fine-tune your plan to keep movement both safe and enjoyable.

When Diabetes Meets Real Life—Stress, Sleep, Work, School, and Travel

Type 1 diabetes touches every part of daily life. It is there at work, at school, during travel, at family events, and on hectic days when everything seems to happen at once. Even when you know what to do, real life does not always go as planned—and that is okay.

Stress, Emotions, and Feeling Overwhelmed

Stress—both physical and emotional—can raise blood glucose levels, even when food and insulin have not changed. Worry, tight schedules, conflict, and lack of sleep can all affect hormones that influence blood glucose.

Living with diabetes also brings the mental load of planning ahead, checking numbers, carrying supplies, and making decisions throughout the day. Feeling frustrated or worn out at times is normal. Making small adjustments, checking blood glucose more often, getting professional support, or simply giving yourself grace can help lighten that load.

Illness, Hormones, and Body Changes

When you are sick, your blood glucose may rise—even if you are eating less. Fever, infection, pain, and dehydration can all affect blood glucose. Checking more often, staying hydrated, and continuing to take your insulin are important steps during illness. Insulin doses may sometimes need adjustment, but insulin should not be stopped.

Hormonal changes, such as during puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, aging, and menopause, can also shift blood glucose patterns. These changes are not always easy to predict and may require adjustments over time.

Work, School, Travel, and Daily Routines

Daily life brings practical challenges. Long meetings, shift work, delayed meals, travel across time zones, and limited access to food can all cause blood glucose to go up or down.

Planning ahead helps, but flexibility matters, too. Carry your supplies, know your rights to manage diabetes at work or school, and have backup plans in case of technology or insulin issues.

Many people find that helpful adjustments at work, such as having flexible breaks, access to food and water, and time to check blood glucose or take insulin, can make a big difference in feeling confident throughout the day.

Know your rights. Federal laws protect the rights of students and workers with diabetes. Learn more about school accommodations (**Section 504 plans**, which ensure that schools meet the needs of students with diabetes, or other conditions) or workplace protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Be Ready for School and Travel

Essential Need:	Purpose:
Insulin and delivery supplies	Consistent access to insulin throughout the day
Blood glucose monitoring tools (BGM or CGM supplies)	Awareness of blood glucose changes as routines shift
Fast-acting carbohydrate sources	Quick treatment of low blood glucose
Glucagon	Emergency treatment for severe hypoglycemia (dangerously low blood glucose)
Snacks and water	Steadier blood glucose and hydration
Backup supplies	Readiness for delays, device issues, or schedule changes
Medical identification	Alert for responders during a medical emergency
Written medication list	Clear information if care is needed away from home
Information for people you trust	Added safety and peace of mind

Helpful Travel Extras

Travel Tips

- Always carry your diabetes supplies with you.
- Do not put your supplies in a checked bag.
- When you travel, these extras can make things easier:
  - Health insurance card
  - Extra chargers and device batteries
  - A small cooler or insulated bag for insulin, if needed
  - Routine supplies and extra insulin, along with additional supplies for blood glucose (blood sugar) monitoring, packed in your carry-on luggage when flying
  - Healthy snacks to help maintain steady blood glucose during delays or schedule changes

Most insulin can be stored safely at room temperature for up to 28 days (some lasting up to 56 days)—check the package insert. Avoid exposing it to extreme heat or freezing temperatures. Your specific insulin's prescribing information will have storage guidance.

Planning ahead and packing a little extra can make travel more comfortable. Whether you are going across town or around the world, travel can shift routines and blood glucose patterns. Bringing what you need and checking your health insurance coverage before international trips can help you feel confident and prepared wherever you go.

When to Ask for Help

If managing diabetes starts to feel overwhelming or your blood glucose targets seem hard to maintain, reach out for help. Diabetes care is never meant to be handled alone.

Reaching out to mental health professionals to address stress, burnout, or other emotions related to managing diabetes is also an important part of caring for your health.

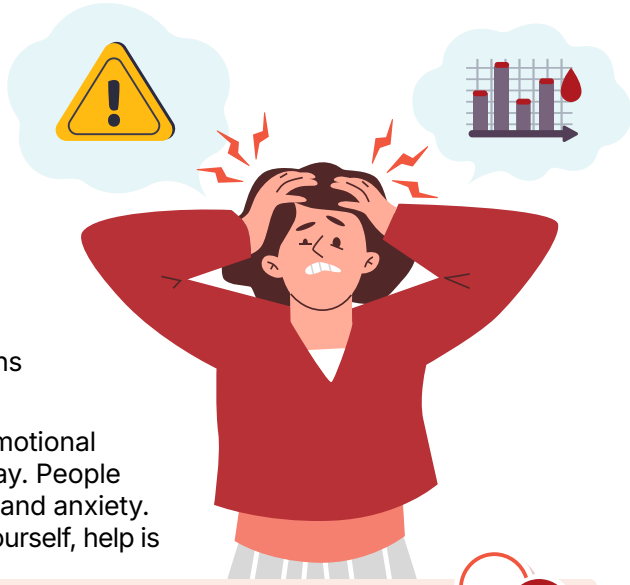
For students, working with school staff such as nurses, teachers, and counselors can make it easier to manage diabetes during the school day. For adults, your workplace's human resources department or insurance provider can also help you navigate benefits and healthcare coverage questions.

Remember, you do not have to do this alone. Building your support team can make living with diabetes feel more manageable every day.

Check & Chat

Your healthcare team, such as your certified diabetes care and education specialist (CDCES), doctor, pharmacist, and registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help explain options, paperwork, insurance coverage, and next steps.

Emotional Wellbeing with Type 1 Diabetes



Diabetes affects more than just blood glucose. The daily decisions and ups and downs of managing it can be mentally draining.

Many people experience what is called diabetes distress—the emotional exhaustion that can come from handling diabetes every single day. People living with type 1 diabetes also report higher rates of depression and anxiety. If you are struggling with sadness, worry, or thoughts of harming yourself, help is available. You are not alone. Reach out anytime—call or text **988 the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline,** available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A common worry is feeling anxious about low blood glucose episodes. Fear of lows can influence self-care choices, such as aiming for higher blood glucose levels to feel safer, which may affect your health over time.

Feeling worried or stressed about CGM alerts, constant data, or making insulin adjustments is very common.

Check & Chat

The good news is that it's manageable! Talking openly with your healthcare team about the alerts and alarms that bother you, ways to tweak settings, insulin changes, and coping strategies can help lower the stress and build your confidence.

You're not alone in this—many people go through it, and your team is there to support you every step of the way.

That's why emotional and practical support are both important parts of diabetes care. Diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services can also provide guidance, skills, and encouragement to help you navigate both the emotional and practical sides of daily care.

Four critical times for diabetes self-management education and support

Because life changes, new health issues, or shifts in daily routines can affect how you manage diabetes, there are four critical times to review knowledge, skills, and self-care plans as part of your diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES):

1. When you are first diagnosed.
2. Annually and/or when you are not meeting treatment targets or any time you need support to reach your goals.
3. When new complicating factors or health problems develop, such as complications or other medical issues.
4. When transitions in life or diabetes care occur, such as a new job, pregnancy, a hospital stay, a move, or changes in your care team or insurance.

What to Do When Stress Shows Up

Small, supportive steps can help you manage stress more easily:

Remember that your body sometimes reacts to stress in ways you cannot fully control, and that is not your fault.

Build in short breaks, moments of movement, or rest when needed.

Take a few slow, deep breaths when numbers feel overwhelming.

Talk with someone you trust about how diabetes affects you.

Notice blood glucose patterns over time instead of focusing on one reading. Each number is information, not a measure of success or failure.

When everything feels like too much, set small goals. Focus on just the next few hours instead of the whole day.

Check & Chat

Ask your healthcare team about resources, diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services, and support groups if stress feels constant.

Remember that you are doing your best—and that matters. You are not alone, and there are people who understand and can help.

Stress and diabetes often go hand in hand. It is common and expected. Learning what helps you feel more balanced can make each day a little easier to manage over time.

Working with Your Healthcare Team

Working with your healthcare team is a partnership. The more prepared you are, the more you can gain from each appointment. Coming ready with questions and concerns helps make your visit meaningful with your team.

Your team can:

- Give you time to discuss your blood glucose (blood sugar) patterns, concerns, and goals
- Help you make decisions that fit your lifestyle and priorities
- Teach you new skills to build your confidence in managing diabetes
- Support both your physical and emotional health
- Adjust your plan as your body or routines change

Diabetes care is not about being perfect. Asking questions and speaking up about what works for you helps shape better care. Your voice matters.

Preparing for a Healthcare Visit

Healthcare visits can feel short, so preparation before helps you make the most of your time together. Think about what matters most to you and bring what will help guide the conversation, such as:

- A list of your medications, insulin doses, and devices
- Recent blood glucose meter (BGM) data or continuous glucose monitor (CGM) reports
- Notes about patterns you have noticed, such as highs, lows, and responses to stress
- Questions or concerns you want to discuss
- Notes on challenges with costs, supplies, or insurance coverage
- A short log of changes in your sleep, activity, and meals
- Screenshots or printed reports of your apps you use

Diabetes Education and Support

Diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services provide the knowledge, skills, and ongoing support to help you confidently manage type 1 diabetes throughout everyday challenges and life changes. You will learn practical skills for monitoring blood glucose, using insulin, problem-solving, and coping with challenges, gaining tools, and building confidence to live well.

DSMES is not a one-time class. It is an ongoing service that can be especially helpful at key times, such as when you are newly diagnosed, starting a new device, or experiencing life changes. You can participate one-on-one or in a group. Services are often led by a certified diabetes care and education specialist (CDCES).

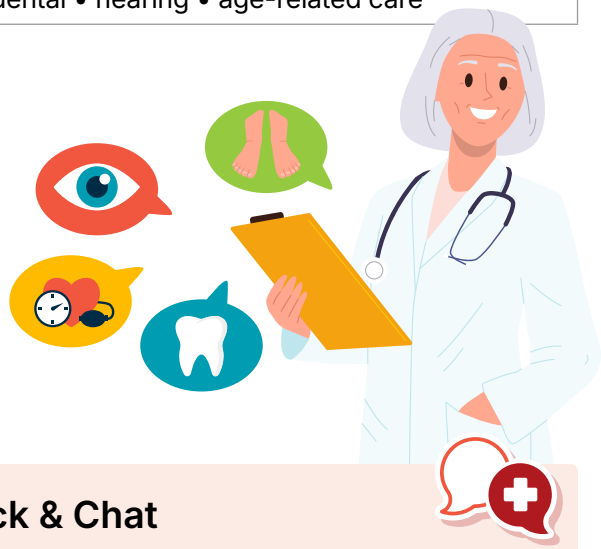
To find DSMES services near you, visit our website www.diabetes.org or call 1-800-DIABETES (800-342-2383).

Team Member:	Helps With:
Doctor (primary care practitioner or endocrinologist)	Overall diabetes management, medications, lab work, and long-term planning
CDCES (Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist)	Day-to-day problem-solving, insulin use, technology training, and skill-building
Registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN)	Food choices, meal timing, insulin-to-food matching, and nutrition guidance
Mental health professional (psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker)	Stress, diabetes distress, anxiety, fear of hypoglycemia, and emotional wellbeing
Pharmacist	Medication questions, medication access, drug interactions, and coordination of diabetes supplies
Exercise professional (exercise physiologist, personal trainer, or physical therapist)	Safe and effective physical activity plans
Other specialists, as needed	• eye • kidney • heart • foot • liver/gastrointestinal • pregnancy • dental • hearing • age-related care

Monitoring Health

Type 1 diabetes affects more than your blood glucose. Your healthcare team will help monitor your overall health through regular screenings and checkups. These include:

- Eye and hearing exams to protect vision and hearing
- Foot checks to monitor circulation and nerve function
- Kidney and liver screenings to prevent or delay kidney or liver disease
- Blood pressure and cholesterol checks to prevent or delay cardiovascular disease
- Dental exams to support healthy teeth and gums



Check & Chat

These visits are part of preventive care. They help catch small problems early, before they become bigger. Ask your healthcare team which screenings you need and how often to schedule them.

Information Sources for Type 1 Diabetes

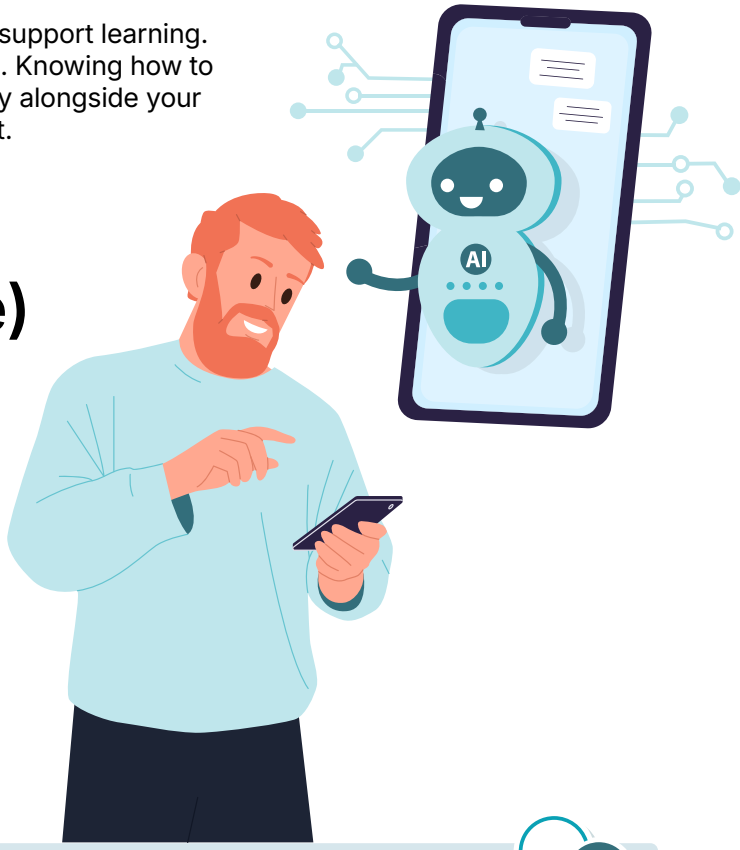
Online tools and platforms can spark helpful questions and support learning. However, not every source of advice fits your diabetes care. Knowing how to spot reliable information—and how to use digital tools wisely alongside your healthcare team—can help you stay informed and confident.

Using Digital Tools and AI (Artificial Intelligence) for Support

Some people use helpful digital tools, like smartphone apps, blood glucose report platforms that collect and analyze your data, or AI-based tools. These can help you organize information, spot patterns in your levels, and prepare questions for your healthcare visits. To make sure they're safe and legitimate, stick to well-known, highly rated apps from trusted sources.

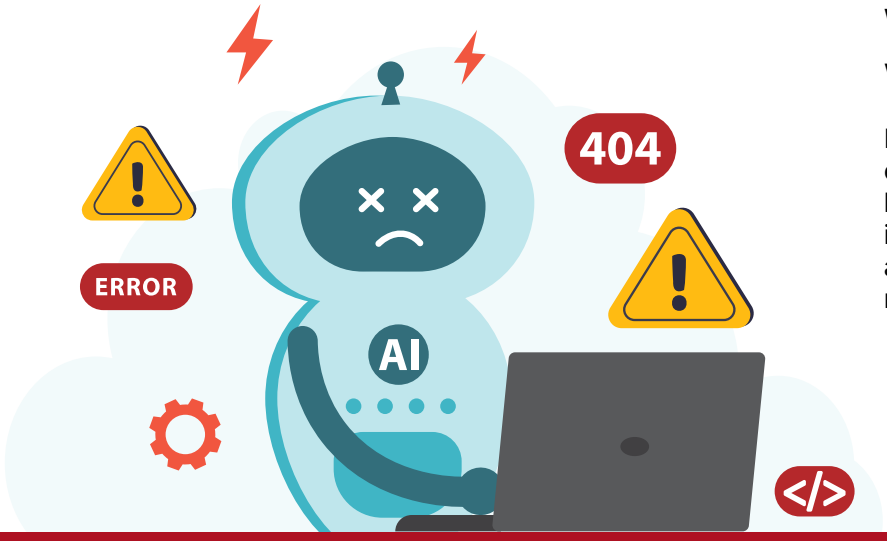
When used thoughtfully, these tools can support learning, tracking, and organization. However, AI tools should not replace medical guidance or be used on their own to make insulin or medication decisions. Your healthcare team can help you decide which tools are safe, helpful, and appropriate for you.

Do not engage with advertisements that promise cures or treatment for diabetes unless you discuss them with your doctor first. Promises that sound too good to be true usually are.



Check & Chat

Stick with trusted sources, ask questions, and work with your healthcare team—they'll help build a plan that's safe, effective, and made for YOU!



What if AI gives the wrong answer?

It happens. AI tools are not always accurate, especially when it comes to personal health details. Use them to explore general information and options but always confirm advice with your healthcare team before making changes to your care.

How to Spot Quality Health Information Online

Use this checklist to help you decide whether health information is worth your time and trust.

What to Look for:	Why It Matters:
From known experts or organizations	Reliable sources back up their information with real credentials—you deserve trustworthy guidance.
Educational focus, not sales pitches	If it's pushing products, supplements, or "miracle" programs, step back—your care isn't for sale.
Backed by evidence, not just stories	Personal stories inspire, but research and clinical proof provide proven results.
Balance, not hype (no “guaranteed” or “cure-all” claims)	Honest information builds real confidence without overpromising.
Matches information from trusted sources (such as the American Diabetes Association® or your endocrinologist)	Information should align with or reference recommendations from diabetes experts and professional organizations.
Updated regularly (check dates!)	Diabetes care changes over time. Look for recent dates or evidence of recent updates.
Encourages discussion with a healthcare team	Trustworthy information supports shared decision-making rather than replacing medical care.
Honors your unique needs	Good sources recognize that diabetes management is personal and not universal.
Information from people you trust	Added safety and peace of mind.

Check & Chat

The next time you hear health information that sounds convincing online, from friends, or anywhere else, pause and use this checklist. Write down questions and bring them to your next appointment. Your healthcare team can help you sort through what applies to you.

Growing with Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes changes as you do. Your insulin needs, routines, technology, and support may change as your body and life change—sometimes gradually, sometimes suddenly. Instead of aiming for one "perfect" plan, think of diabetes care as an ongoing process. Review what is working and adjust when needed.

Here are a few ways diabetes care can shift across life stages:

Childhood

Parents, family members, caregivers, schools, and your healthcare team often work together. Over time, you may take on more responsibility with guidance and support. Growth spurts, activity levels, and school schedules can affect blood glucose (blood sugar), and adjustments are expected.

Early adulthood (college or career start)

Moving out, starting new jobs, changes in insurance, and shifting schedules may mean managing appointments, supplies, and insulin more independently. Staying connected with your healthcare team, asking questions, and building routines can increase your confidence and safety.

Mid-life

Hormonal shifts, stress, sleep changes, and other health conditions can influence blood glucose patterns. Regular follow-ups and updated strategies can support your long-term health.

Teenage years and young adulthood

Hormones, growth, changing sleep patterns, stress, and increasing independence can affect insulin sensitivity and blood glucose levels. Balancing diabetes with school, work, sports, and social life takes patience, flexibility, and backup plans.

Pregnancy and family planning

If you are planning a pregnancy, talk early with your healthcare team. Keeping blood glucose close to target helps protect you and your baby. Your monitoring needs and insulin doses often change before, during, and after pregnancy, so regular check-ins and support matter.

Older adulthood

The focus of diabetes care often shifts toward safety, comfort, and quality of life. Changes in vision, dexterity, appetite, memory, or financial circumstances may require adjustments to tools, routines, or caregiver support.

Across all ages and stages, type 1 diabetes affects more than blood glucose. Stress, fatigue, fear of low blood glucose, or burnout can show up at any time—and that is normal.

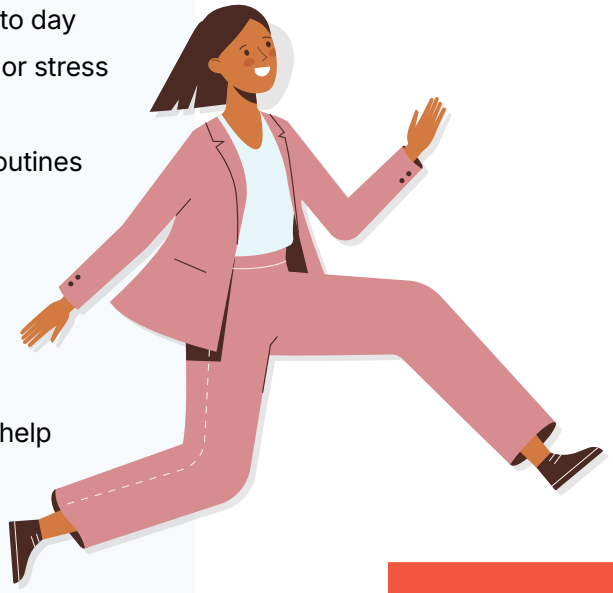
When these concerns arise, talk openly about what you are experiencing. Share concerns with your healthcare team, a family member, or a trusted friend. Give yourself grace as you adjust and adapt, one step at a time. This is a natural part of living well with type 1 diabetes.

Your Next Steps

Living with type 1 diabetes is an ongoing process. You do not need to know everything right away or do everything perfectly. What matters most is learning what your body needs, noticing patterns, and adjusting as your life changes.

Safety comes first. From there, routines develop, decisions feel steadier, and confidence grows.

- **Take manageable steps:** Progress happens through thoughtful daily decisions, such as:
  - Learning from your blood glucose patterns
  - Staying flexible as things change from day to day
  - Preparing for new situations such as travel or stress
  - Refining your approach as you learn
- **Build routines that support you:** Supportive routines can make daily care feel more stable. As your life changes, your routines can change, too. That is normal and expected.
- **Lean on your support system:** You are at the center of your healthcare team, but the healthcare professionals on it, along with your family, friends, and community, are all part of your support system. They can help with difficult decisions and daily challenges. Reach out when you need support.
- **Notice what is working:** Focus on what improves your health, confidence, and quality of life. Those insights help guide your next steps.



Looking Ahead

Today, more tools and support are available than ever before. Technologies such as continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), insulin pumps, and automated insulin delivery (AID) systems continue to improve, making blood glucose management more precise and less demanding. Research is rapidly advancing our understanding, treatments continue to evolve, and powerful support networks are connecting people with type 1 diabetes around the world.

Connect your diabetes goals to what you truly value and what matters most in your whole life.

When you set goals for managing diabetes, think about the things that are most important to you—like spending quality time with family and friends, staying active and independent, your hobbies, traveling without worry, feeling strong and full of energy, or being there for the people you love.

By linking your diabetes steps (like checking your glucose, choosing balanced meals, moving your body, or using your tools and apps) to these big things you value, your goals become more personal and meaningful.

When goals connect to what really matters to you, you're more motivated to stick with them, and it feels less like "managing diabetes" and more like protecting the life you care about.

With the right knowledge, practical tools, and strong support from your team and loved ones, you can make small, healthy changes that fit your life. Set goals that matter to you, celebrate every win—no matter how small—and keep building habits that help you feel stronger and more empowered. Diabetes is just one part of who you are—it doesn't define you or stop you from living fully. Take it one positive step at a time.

Notes:

American Diabetes Association®

2451 Crystal Drive, Suite 900 | Arlington, VA 22202 | 1-800-DIABETES | diabetes.org

Learn more at
diabetes.org/T1DStandards

American Diabetes Association. Your rights and care standards: a guide for people with type 1 diabetes. Diabetes, Obesity, and CardioMetabolic CARE. Published online ahead of print 4 June 2026 (doi: 10.2337/doc26-pt1d).
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